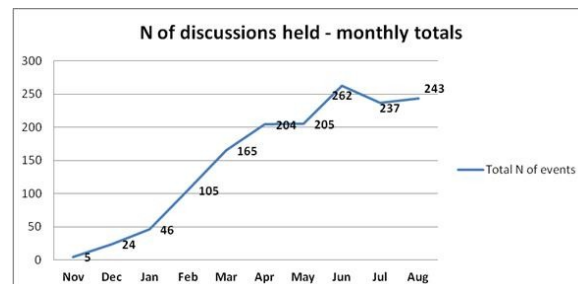


In this issue:

Centers for Civic Engagement	1
Recognition of Youth Political Party Participants	2
Parliamentary Intern Graduates	3
Georgian-Turkish Trans-boundary Park	3
USAID and Czech Collaborative Project	4
Kvareli Wells water	4
SC/FELTP Graduates	5
Vulnerable Victims Conference	6
New Rules for Witness Interviews	6
Organized Crime and Plea Bargaining	7
New Peace Corps Volunteers	7

Centers for Civic Engagement Buzz with Activity

USAID's nine Centers for Civic Engagement have seen a spike in usage and activity in the run-up to parliamentary elections, demonstrating the need for the centers politically neutral spaces for community discussions, informational sessions, and political party meetings in Georgia's regional cities. Elections related discussions held by NGOs increased from 17 in July to 29 in August.



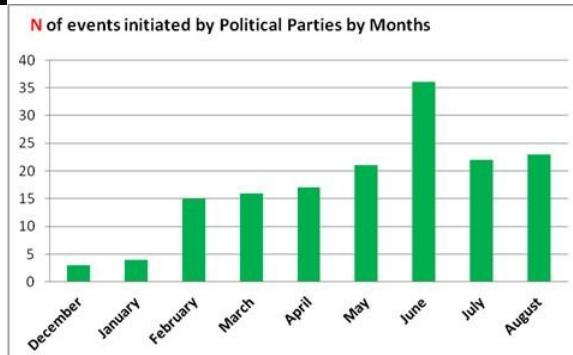
Number of issue-based discussions held at CCEs throughout Georgia by month



Tbilisi- On May 17, after nine CCEs were opened in cities across Georgia, Ambassador Bas presented the concept to political party leaders, NGOs, and journalists

Political parties held 23 meetings across all CCEs in August, an average of two per month, per center. A total of 243 meetings were hosted in August. Additional elections related events include training on election procedures for elections observers and presentation to local citizens of political platforms by majoritarian candidates of various political parties.

The CCEs are free of charge for users, who can book space on a first-come, first-served basis according to publically posted usage guidelines. Use of the centers can be coordinated with the local staff or through the CCE website <http://www.cce.ge>



After a spike in early summer, political parties; meetings in CCE slowed down a bit in the summer vacation season. Many more meetings are now planned in advance of the elections.

Recognition of Youth Political Party Participants

Participants in a series of debates among youth wings of political parties were recognized at an event in July. Ambassador Bass presented awards to the winning teams as well as certificates to all participants. The USAID funded project's third season of televised youth political party debates began in December, with eleven political parties taking part.

What initially began as a smaller project, quickly gained popularity among youth and garnered the interest of party leaders. Prior to this project, televised debates were rare in Georgia, especially outside of election season, and the public seldom had the opportunity to understand the platforms and policies of various political parties.



Tbilisi, Georgia- On July 2, Ambassador Bass presented awards to participants in a series of debates among youth wings of political parties.

In fact, some parties did not have policies on issues proposed for debate, such as agriculture. The debates helped define party ideologies, promote transparent public discussion of political issues, build emerging political leaders' public speaking and communication skills, and encourage open and constructive dialogue between parties. The youth wings of different parties began working together and formed a coalition, Youth for Fair Elections in December 2010. The group closely followed the election code reform talks and held regular meetings with speakers and discussions.

The final season debate was held on the 5th of May with the United National Movement and the Christian Democratic Movement debating the final topic, the role of the media. They were judged by a panel of three experts, and CDM won by a wide margin.

Following the debates, six of the youth party members representing four different parties, were able to travel to the United States on a study tour. The members chosen for the study tour were nominated by their parties to share their experience and learn more about political youth activities with other participants from across the globe.

Televised youth debates quickly gained popularity and provide political parties' platforms and policies

Parliamentary Intern Graduates

The Parliamentary Internship program celebrated its sixth year, with the graduation of eleven interns. The June 29th graduation was attended by Ambassador Bass. The USAID program provides university graduates with an intensive one-year internship covering Georgian policy, legislative process, and knowledge of the parliamentary system.

The program offers both practical experience in Georgia's policy and legislative processes and



Ambassador Bass and Speaker of Parliament David Bakradze hosted a graduation ceremony for the 2011-2012 class of Parliamentary interns.

increased knowledge of the parliamentary system. It also represents an ongoing commitment to support Parliament with interns providing research, analysis, and translation to committees, factions, and departments. They also participate in committee activities as researchers, report preparation for parliamentarians, and respond to citizens' questions.

Interns receive monthly professional development trainings on topics such as: rules of procedures and legislative drafting, speech and press release writing, training of trainers, communications, strategic planning, and resume writing.

Georgian-Turkish Transboundary Park

Earlier this summer, the Georgian government established Machakhela National Park directly adjacent to Camili Biosphere Reserve, a national park in Turkey. Through the assistance of USAID and the U.S. Department of the Interior, the governments of Georgia and Turkey developed and signed an action plan for cooperation on managing the two protected areas in July. The new transboundary park is the first of its kind in the former Soviet Union and serves as an important example for the region.



Machakhela Valley, Georgia— On July 18, Georgia and Turkey signed The Machakhela-Jamili Joint Action Plan to cooperate on the management of the new transboundary park.

USAID and Czech Development Collaborative Program

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in July by USAID Mission Director Stephen M. Haykin and Czech Ambassador to Georgia Ivan Jestrab. The joint project seeks to further the



Tbilisi, Georgia- On July 13, USAID Mission Director Stephen M. Haykin and the Czech Ambassador to Georgia, Ivan Jestrab sign an MOU on a program to develop the field of addiction studies in Georgia.

development of the addiction science field in Georgia to reduce the use of narcotic drugs, the number of injecting drug users, and the threat of HIV in Georgia.

The collaborative effort was made possible through the Emerging Donors Challenge Fund. This U.S. initiative encourages and furthers partnership projects with countries in Eastern Europe that have established their own development programs after successfully graduating from being receivers of assistance.

The partners will develop a higher education curriculum in addictology, as well as a curriculum for continuous education to train teachers and trainers in the newly created and certified curricula. The curricula will be piloted in the Ilia State University, IB Euro-Caucasus University in Tbilisi, and Batumi State University.

Kvareli Wells Provide Town Potable Water

In June, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed four wells in the town of Akhalsopeli, in the Kvareli region. Multiple floods caused significant damage to the local water supply, leaving the approximately 8000 residents without potable water and a shortage of water in the summer. Prior to the completion of the wells,



Kvareli wells in Akhalsopeli

the local municipality was limited to providing unfiltered river water to residents.

To ensure the continued operation of the wells, training instruction was provided to designated representatives of the community as well as a provision for spare parts for key items. An official ribbon cutting ceremony for this project is slated for the near future.



South Caucasus Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program Graduates

On June 04, 2012, the South Caucasus Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (SC/FELTP) graduated its second class in Tbilisi. Sixteen epidemiologists and laboratory managers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia received diplomas in applied epidemiology and laboratory management.

“We all achieve more when we work together, particularly across borders in this special region with so many historical and cultural ties, to better address the common threats to our health.”

SC/FELTP has now graduated a total of 27 specialists, who are now practicing within Ministries of Health and Agriculture of South Caucasus countries.

The two-year program combines both classroom training and mentoring in practical disease surveillance, outbreak investigation, and prevention and control. The goal of SC/ FELTP is to strengthen epidemiology and laboratory capacities to detect, control, and prevent diseases affecting

humans and animals. The program also reflects an ongoing collaboration between governments and agencies of the U.S., Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijan.

Among the accomplishments noted at their graduation were the investigation of approximately 20 disease outbreaks and review of surveillance data and systems for infectious and non-infectious diseases or conditions. The residents also played a major role in two large surveys involving brucellosis among animals, and the other knowledge of risk factors for brucellosis and anthrax among rural Georgians. The next graduating class is expected in June 2013.



Graduation Ceremony of the 2nd Cohort of South Caucasus Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program, US CDC Georgia Country Office

Vulnerable Victims Conference

In support of creating Victim/Witness Assistants positions, styled after a U.S. model, Embassy Tbilisi's Regional Legal Advisor's (RLAs) sponsored a Vulnerable Victims Conference in Batumi. The June conference, attended by prosecutors, defense attorneys, and various NGOs concentrated on victim services. It also addressed re-defining Georgia's treatment of vulnerable victims.

RLAs provided a presentation on the American model and prosecutorial interaction with them. Georgia RLAs will coordinate continued training of the Victim/Witness Assistants with an emphasis on serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking in persons (TIP).

This initiative, in conjunction with expanding technical assistance to include training to prosecutors who are specifically designated to handle vulnerable victim cases, are aiming to increase the number of vulnerable victim cases prosecuted annually while addressing the unique needs of domestic violence, sexual assault, and TIP victims.



Batumi House of Justice

New Law Enforcement Rules for Witness Interviews

Training of 72 prosecutors was held in June at the new House of Justice in Batumi concerning Articles 113 and 114 of the Criminal Procedure Code taking effect in 2013. Article 113 will no longer allow law enforcement to force witnesses to provide information through arrest or threat of charges. Police will be required to inform witnesses that they cannot be compelled to give an interview and they have the right to have an attorney before being interviewed. Article 114 will be the only viable method law enforcement will have to compel information from witnesses at the investigative stage.

Article 114 allows prosecutors to subpoena witnesses before magistrate judges, similar to U.S. prosecutors use in Grand Jury investigations. Training provided Georgian prosecutors with practices on how to convince reluctant witness to voluntarily provide information and how to compel witnesses via Article 114 to provide information when they refuse to do so voluntarily. This was the last of four rounds of trainings on this subject and all 300 prosecutors have now been trained on how to best utilize the new law on witness interviewing and interrogation.



Batumi
Conference

Conference of Judges on Organized Crime and Plea Bargaining

A July workshop on Organized Crime cases was held in Batumi for 20 Georgian trial court judges. The Embassy's Regional Legal Advisor and guest lecturers discussed U.S. best practices on complex case management, plea bargaining, and jury trial management. The conference also served

to highlight the role of judges in an adversarial system, which Georgians shifted to in 2010. The role of a judge was described as a neutral, but not diminished presence in the courtroom. The active role of a judge within an adversarial system, ensures fairness, which includes intervention to prevent ineffec-

tive assistance of counsel.

The conference allowed Georgian judges to actively engage with the speakers, drawing upon the speakers' familiarity, experience, and expertise in the courtroom and with U.S. best practices.

Twelfth Group of Peace Corps Volunteers Arrives

Peace Corps began its twelfth year of service to Georgia with the commencement of a new group of 40 Peace Corps Volunteers. A ceremony celebrating the commencement of their Volunteer service was held on July 20.

The Volunteers included 33 English teachers and 7 Social Entrepreneurship and Organizational Development advisors who will teach English at secondary schools, work

in NGOs, or other local organizations.

The Peace Corps has shared with the world America's most precious resource - its people. Coming from all walks of life, Volunteers represent the rich diversity of American society. As the Peace Corps approached its 50th anniversary in 2011, its service legacy continues to promote peace and friendship around the world.

Since 1961, over 200,000 Volunteers have helped promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of the 139 countries in which they have served. Currently, about 8,000 Peace Corps Volunteers serve in 78 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe, and the Middle East.

The Peace Corps
has shared with
the world
America's most
precious resource
- its people